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# NPC Approves 16 Development Projects Worth 3.5 Billion Afghanis

KABUL: The meeting of the National Procurement Commission (NPC) was held on Wednesday at Marmarin Palace, with the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Berader Akhund, on the chair, approving 16 development projects worth 3.5 billion Afghanis.

The meeting reviewed 40 projects submitted for approval and following detailed discussions, the commission approved 16 projects and endorsed necessary amendments to 20 others, the office of the Deputy PM for Economic Affairs said in a statement.

The commission also tasked designated committees to negotiate proposed prices with winning contractors for two projects and report the outcomes to the commission's leadership, the statement said.

Meanwhile, contracts for two additional projects were cancelled after the selected companies failed to demonstrate readiness to implement them in accordance with contractual obligations, the statement said, adding that the firms were subsequently referred to the relevant committee.

Among the approved and amended projects are geo-

technical studies for the Qadis Khordak water reservoir dam in Badghis Province and the Kilegi Dam in Baghlan Province, completion of a 600-metric-ton cold storage facility in Paktika Province, design and installation of a 10,000-ton oil storage facility in the Amu Darya oil basin, the statement added.

Construction of a 50-bed public hospital in Charchino District of Uruzgan Province, establishment of a freight transport terminal in Tarinkot, and the development of several urban roads in Kabul were among the approved and amended projects, the statement further said.

The projects also include the completion of electricity transmission and distribution schemes in various provinces aimed at improving energy access and infrastructure across the country and all projects will be financed through the budget of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the statement concluded.

**The Kabul Times**

# Security Commission Calls for Enhanced Measures During Muharram

KABUL: The meeting of the Central Commission for Clearance and Security Affairs was held on Wednesday with Mawlavi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, Minister of National Defense and head of the commission, on the chair, emphasizing the need for heightened security measures during the month of Muharram.

The meeting evaluated the country's defense and security situation and examined reports submitted from various provinces, the commission said in a statement.

The meeting included extensive discussions on a range of security-related issues, with officials assessing existing challenges and evaluating measures aimed at maintaining stability and public safety

across the country.The statement added that necessary decisions were taken to ensure timely and effective responses to any concerns nationwide.

Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening security arrangements during Muharram to safeguard public gatherings and maintain order throughout the observance period, the statement said.

**The Kabul Times**

# MoIC Holds Meeting for Commemoration of IEA's Victory Day

KABUL: A consultative meeting was held with Mawlavi Atiqullah Azizi, the Deputy Minister of Information and Culture for Arts and Culture, to coordinate preparations for the commemoration of the 24th of Asad, marking the Victory Day of the Islamic Emirate against the foreign occupying forces.

The meeting, attended by representatives of various government institutions, focused on plans to organize ceremonies and public events marking the occasion, the ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

Azizi highlighted the significance of the day and stressed the importance of holding well-organized events with broad public participation.

Participants exchanged views and presented proposals aimed at ensuring successful commemorations, according to the statement.At the conclusion of the meeting, relevant institutions were instructed to prepare their programs and initiatives for presentation at a future session.**The Kabul Times**

# Efforts Underway to Eradicate Poppy Countrywide, Fitrat

KABUL: The Islamic Emirate has welcomed recent remarks by Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu regarding Afghanistan's efforts to combat narcotics production and trafficking.

Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, said in an audio-tape the other day that serious efforts are underway to eradicate narcotics and that extensive measures have been implemented to curb cultivation, production, and trafficking nationwide.

His comments came after Shoigu stated that Afghan authorities had fulfilled their commitments in the fight against drugs and significantly reduced narcotics production and smuggling.

According to Shoigu, production and trafficking have declined by around 90 percent in Afghanistan, describing the development as a major achievement resulting from sustained policy implementation.

The Islamic Emirate maintains that counter-narcotics efforts remain a priority and says the country has witnessed a substantial reduction in drug-related activities in recent years.

**The Kabul Times**

# Islamic Emirate Committed to Recruiting Professional Cadres, Minister

KABUL: Mawlavi Neda Mohammad Nadim, Minister of Higher Education, said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to recruiting qualified professionals and creating employment opportunities for skilled cadres across the country.

Speaking at a graduation ceremony of 2,200 students from various departments of 12 faculties of Nangarhar University, Nadim encouraged graduates to continue advancing their expertise and acquiring specialized knowledge in their respective fields, according to a statement from the ministry on Wednesday.

He emphasized the importance of professional development in supporting national progress and strengthening key sectors of the country.

During the ceremony, graduates received their academic certificates in the presence of government officials, university leaders, faculty members, and family representatives, the statement added.

**The Kabul Times**

# EU Allocates €20 Million Through IOM to Support Vulnerable Afghans

KABUL: The European Union has allocated €20 million to the International Organization for Migration to support essential health, protection, and reintegration services for vulnerable populations in Afghanistan.

According to a statement from the EU Delegation in Afghanistan the other day, the funding will help provide assistance to returnees, internally displaced persons, and other at-risk groups across the country.

The initiative aims to create livelihood opportunities and promote greater self-reliance among vulnerable communities while improving access to basic services and support mechanisms, the statement said.The assistance forms part of ongoing international efforts to address humanitarian needs and support long-term resilience among affected populations.

**The Kabul Times**

# MoUs Signed for Demining, Mine Risk Education, Statement

KABUL: Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority said in a statement on Wednesday that it has signed two Memorandums of Understanding worth $337,000 with a mine-clearing organization to support demining activities and mine-risk awareness programs in several provinces.Under the agreements, mine clearance operations and public awareness campaigns on the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance will be implemented in Kabul, Parwan, Panjshir, Ghazni, Takhar, and Badakhshan provinces, the statement said.

According to the statement, the projects are intended to reduce risks posed by explosive remnants of war and enhance the safety of local communities by preventing casualties and protecting civilians.

**The Kabul Times**

# Afghan Delegation Return Home as Brussels Meeting Ends

KABUL: An Afghan delegation led by Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi has concluded a visit to Brussels at the invitation of the European Union, holding a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings with European officials.Balkhi said in a statement the other day that discussions focused on the resumption of consular services for Afghans residing in Europe, confidence-building measures, and ways to enhance engagement between the two sides.

The delegation also addressed challenges facing Afghan nationals whose asylum applications have been rejected and who continue to face various legal and social difficulties in European countries, he said.

The spokesman expressed hope that the visit would open new avenues for constructive engagement, strengthen efforts to address the concerns of Afghans living abroad, and contribute to expanding cooperation based on mutual respect and shared interests.

**The Kabul Times**

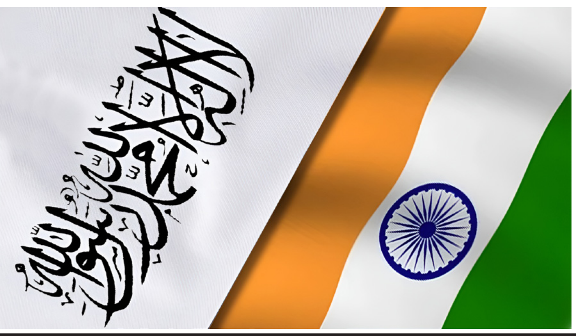
# Kabul, Delhi Hold Talks on Trade, Investment Cooperation

KABUL: Sayed Karim Hashemi, the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, in a meeting with leaders and members of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi, discussed strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.

According to a statement from the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment on Wednesday, talks focused on expanding bilateral trade, attracting joint investments, promoting technology transfer, strengthening industrial cooperation, and enhancing engagement between the private sectors of both countries.

Hashemi highlighted Afghanistan's investment opportunities and invited Indian investors to explore business prospects in the country.

Indian business representatives, meanwhile, expressed readiness to cooperate in the pharmaceutical, logistics, cargo transportation, and manufacturing sectors and announced plans to send a 20-member trade delegation to Afghanistan in the near future.**The Kabul Times**



# Work Begins on $10 Million Commercial Complex in Paktika

KABUL: Construction work worth $10 million has begun on a major commercial complex in the city of Sharana, the capital of Paktika province, the private Omed Radio reported on Wednesday. Financed by an Afghan investor, the project will be implemented on 17 jeribs of land, the Radio said, adding that the complex will include 33 five-story commercial markets, 52 shops, internal roads, and other supporting facilities designed to accommodate a wide range of business activities.The local officials said the project is expected to play an important role in expanding commercial activity, attracting additional investment, and improving business infrastructure in the province.The commercial center is also expected to create employment opportunities for dozens of people during both the construction and operational phases, contributing to local economic development.Authorities described the initiative as a significant private-sector investment that reflects growing confidence in economic opportunities within the province and supports broader efforts to promote trade and investment across the region.

**The Kabul Times**

# Domestic Pharmaceutical Production Surpasses 40 Percent of Afghan Market, Ministry

KABUL: The country's domestic pharmaceutical industry now supplies more than 40 percent of the country's medicine and health products market, the Ministry of Public Health said in a statement on Wednesday.

The figures were presented during a consultative meeting between the Food and Drug Deputy Ministry of the Ministry of Public Health and representatives of 22 pharmaceutical and healthcare product manufacturing companies, the statement said.

Factory officials stated that local production previously accounted for less than five percent of the national market but has grown significantly in recent years.

They added that Afghan manufacturers now possess full production capacity for several categories of medicines and are capable of meeting domestic demand for those products.

The meeting also focused on challenges facing the sector and ways to further strengthen domestic production, improve quality standards, and reduce reliance on imports.

**The Kabul Times**

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**Food for thought**

***Today's Generation Guarantees Our Bright Future***

# Employment for Returning Teachers, Hope for Afghanistan

The recent influx of Afghan returnees from Pakistan has created both challenges and opportunities for Afghanistan's education system and broader economy. In Nangarhar alone, more than 19,000 students have re-enrolled in schools after returning, and hundreds of teachers have come back with them. The Department of Education has announced the recruitment of 676 teachers to meet this urgent demand, a step that reflects the importance of integrating skilled returnees into the national workforce.

The voices of returnees highlight a pressing reality describing that employment is not merely about financial survival, but about contributing to the country's progress. Afghans with technical and vocational training should be given jobs so they can support their families and help build the nation. Another emphasized the hardship of returning under difficult circumstances, noting that without employment opportunities, economic struggles will persist. These appeals underscore a broader truth that Afghanistan cannot afford to overlook the expertise of its own citizens, while teachers, in particular, hold a vital role. Education is the foundation of national development, and the presence of experienced educators ensures that the next generation receives quality learning. Many of these teachers have taught in Pakistan, gaining valuable experience in diverse educational settings. Their integration into Afghan schools will not only reduce unemployment but also enrich the learning environment for thousands of students.

Yet the challenge extends beyond classrooms. Among the returnees are university graduates, skilled technicians, and professionals in various fields. If their talents are left unused, Afghanistan risks wasting a reservoir of knowledge and expertise. Conversely, if jobs are created based on qualifications, the country can benefit from a workforce capable of driving progress in education, infrastructure, healthcare, and beyond.

The forced deportation of Afghans from Pakistan has brought home hundreds of thousands of people through the Torkham border. This sudden return demands a coordinated response. Employment opportunities must be expanded not only for teachers but for all skilled professionals. By doing so, Afghanistan can transform a humanitarian challenge into a national opportunity.

Providing lawful livelihoods for returnees is more than an act of compassion; it is a strategic investment in Afghanistan's future. When teachers educate, when technicians build, and when professionals innovate, the country moves closer to stability and prosperity.

The call from returnees is clear which is asking for creation of jobs that match their skills, and Afghanistan will advance toward development and self-reliance.

In this moment of transition, the nation must recognize that its greatest resource is its people.

By opening doors for returning teachers and professionals, Afghanistan can turn the pain of displacement into the promise of progress.

# Russia, Afghanistan, and the New Anti-Narcotics Reality

***By: Ghulam Reza Omidi***

Recent remarks by Sergei Shoigu, Secretary of Russia's Security Council, highlighting an almost 90 percent decline in Afghanistan's drug production and trafficking have attracted considerable attention across the region.

After returning from a BRICS gathering in India, Shoigu openly praised the Afghan authorities, stating that they had largely fulfilled their commitments and significantly curbed the flow of heavy narcotics.

The figures themselves are striking, but the broader significance goes beyond statistics.

They point to evolving security priorities, economic challenges, and changing diplomatic relationships that are reshaping the geopolitical landscape of Eurasia.

The dramatic reduction did not occur by chance. It was the result of a strict and coordinated enforcement campaign.

Unlike many anti-drug initiatives of the past two decades, which often struggled because of corruption, local power structures, and limited economic alternatives for farmers, the current administration treated the ban on poppy cultivation as a firm and non-negotiable policy.

Through rigorous enforcement of the cultivation ban and sustained operations against drug-processing facilities, the authorities disrupted networks that had long been deeply entrenched. Shoigu's observation that heavy narcotics are now largely under control suggests that the effort has extended far beyond simply eliminating poppy fields.

It reflects a broader campaign aimed at dismantling the infrastructure responsible for transforming raw opium into refined heroin and other illicit drugs.

However, a suppression campaign of this scale creates massive economic vacuums.

For millions of rural Afghan farmers, the poppy was not just a cash crop; it was an economic lifeline and a form of informal credit in an otherwise isolated financial system. Transitioning these agrarian communities to traditional crops like wheat, saffron, or pomegranates requires vast resources, modern irrigation, and open export corridors—economic luxuries that the country is currently forced to build from scratch amid intense international banking restrictions.

Moscow's public praise is far from a casual diplomatic compliment.

For decades, Russia has sat on the frontlines of the "Northern Route"—the trafficking pipeline that moves Afghan opiates through Central Asia into major Russian cities, fueling high addiction rates, public health crises, and organized crime networks.

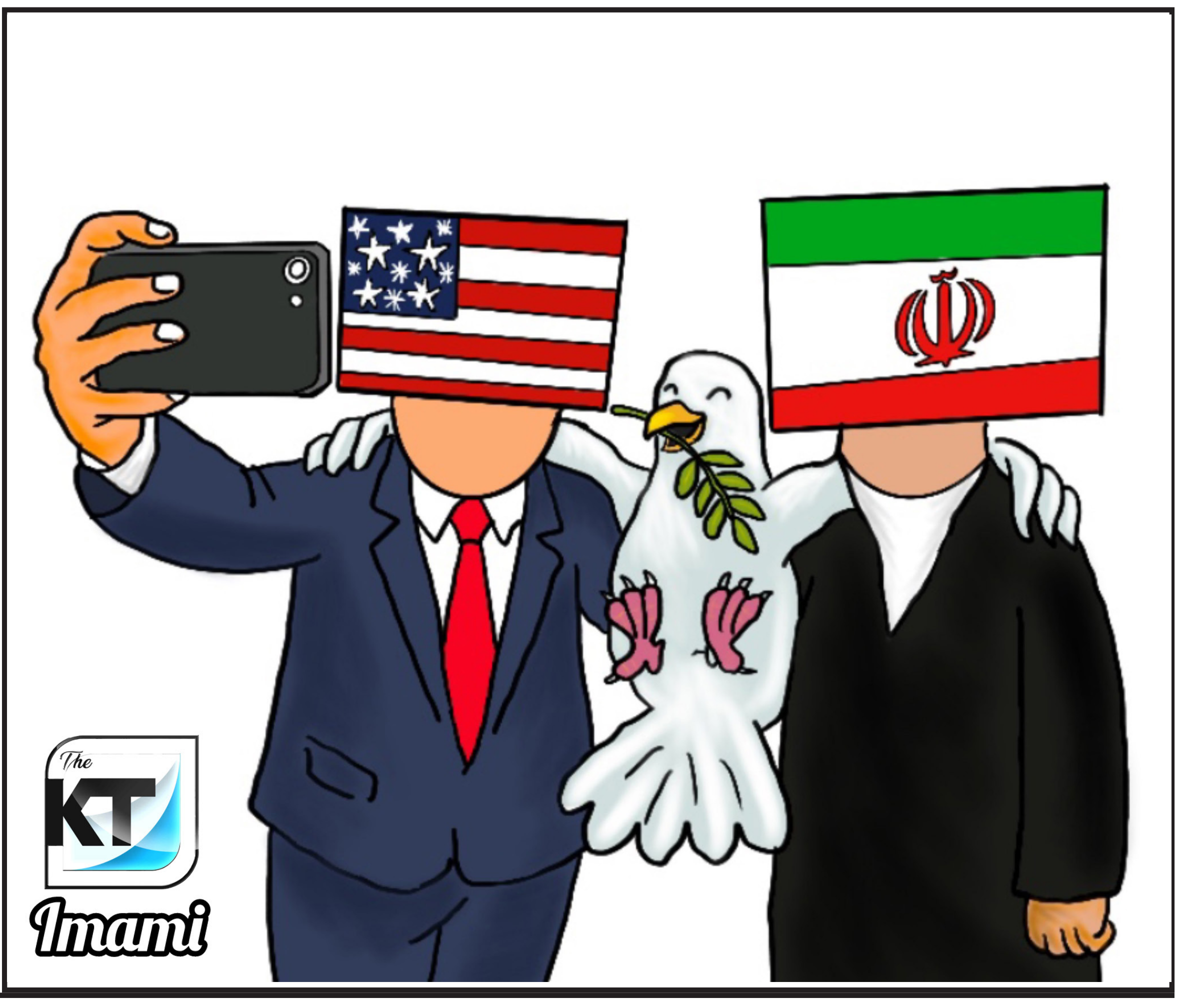
For the Kremlin, a porous Afghan border is a direct threat to domestic security and regional stability across the post-Soviet space.

By publicly highlighting Kabul's success at a major international forum like BRICS, Shoigu is sending a clear signal. Moscow is essentially validating the current Afghan administration as a reliable partner capable of managing border security and suppressing transnational threats. This pragmatism suggests that Russia views tangible, boots-on-the-ground results in counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics as far more critical than ideological alignment.The timing and venue of Shoigu's remarks are deeply telling. Delivering this assessment fresh off a BRICS meeting in India places the Afghan drug issue squarely within the framework of Eurasian regional integration. For ambitious, multi-billion-dollar infrastructure initiatives—such as the Trans-Afghan Railway or regional energy networks—to secure long-term international funding and operational safety, the entire neighborhood needs to be stabilized.

By assuring regional powers that the flow of illicit narcotics is being systematically choked off, Russia is helping pave the way for a more normalized, commerce-driven approach to Afghanistan. The underlying message to neighboring economies is simple: the current administration in Kabul can enforce difficult policies effectively, making them a viable stakeholder for long-term regional trade agreements.

While the current narrative is dominated by praise for this massive logistical victory, the long-term sustainability of the anti-narcotics campaign remains an open question. Eradication is a highly visible, immediate achievement, but keeping cultivation at zero requires institutional resilience and genuine economic alternatives for the rural populace.

Shoigu's statements reveal that regional diplomacy in Eurasia is increasingly driven by hard security metrics. By tackling the drug trade head-on, Kabul has successfully turned a massive domestic challenge into a powerful diplomatic lever, forcing regional powers like Russia to look past political friction and engage directly with the realities on the ground.



# Internet Prices Must Be Reduced

*By: Rahmat Shah Faraz*

In recent weeks, Kabul residents have voiced growing frustration over the rising cost of internet services. What was once a 30 GB package for 1,200 Afghanis has now shrunk to 25 GB for the same price, while the quality of service has declined. Citizens are receiving messages from telecommunications companies not announcing innovation, but signaling higher costs.

One resident explained that packages activated at a certain price one month are no longer available at the same rate the next. Another pointed out that a one-gigabyte daily package, previously 20 Afghanis, now costs 30. These increases, though seemingly small in isolation, accumulate into a heavy burden for families who rely on the internet for education, work, and communication.

The discrepancies extend beyond price hikes. Reviews of telecom websites reveal that similar packages are offered at different rates across networks. Citizens rightly question why such inconsistencies exist and demand standardized pricing. As one Kabul resident put it, "Internet prices vary across all networks. These rates should be standardized. The government should also monitor the situation."

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has acknowledged these concerns, stating that a review is underway and that some companies have reverted to previous pricing structures. While this is a welcome step, it is far from sufficient. Afghanistan's internet costs are already among the highest in the region, exceeding those of neighboring countries. In a nation where average incomes are low, such inflated prices are unjustifiable.

Internet access is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. It connects students to knowledge, entrepreneurs to markets, families to loved ones, and citizens to the wider world. When prices rise unchecked, the digital divide widens, leaving many Afghans excluded from opportunities the internet provides. This exclusion undermines national development, as education, commerce, and governance increasingly depend on digital connectivity.

Citizens are clear in their demands: stronger government oversight, stricter regulation of telecommunications companies, and standardized pricing across networks.

The Ministry of Communications must act decisively, not only to review but to enforce fair practices. Transparency in pricing, accountability for service quality, and protection of consumers should be non-negotiable. Afghanistan cannot afford to let internet access become the privilege of a few. The country is striving to integrate into the global landscape, and affordable, reliable internet is the bridge that makes this possible. If that bridge is weakened by rising costs, Afghanistan risks isolating its people at a time when connectivity is most critical.

The responsibility lies with both regulators and providers. Telecommunications companies must recognize that their role is not merely commercial but national. By offering fair prices and consistent service, they contribute to Afghanistan's progress. The government, in turn, must ensure that these companies operate within a framework that prioritizes public interest over profit.

Afghans have endured hardship and instability, yet they continue to seek education, work, and connection through the internet.

Their voices must be heard. Internet prices in Afghanistan are already higher than in many other countries, and this should not be the case. It is time for serious attention, decisive regulation, and a commitment to keeping the digital bridge open for all.

# Afghanistan: How Railways Drive Economic Development

*By: Romal Sayedi*

Railways serve as the backbone of modern civilization, driving economic growth while fostering social development through extensive rail networks that connect people, places, and possibilities. From reducing transportation costs to promoting environmental sustainability, railways play a pivotal role in economic development, shaping prosperous and interconnected societies. Many countries are still working to develop their transportation networks, facilitate connectivity between markets, and create favorable conditions for their trade with other countries.

Afghanistan has already started to develop its railways networks as railways are considered an important part of every country's economic strategy.

Due to its geographical location, Afghanistan is located at an important crossroads in the region. This position gives the country the opportunity to become an important trade and transit route between Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East.

As railways function as economic catalysts, with transforming how nations conduct business and generate wealth, efforts are underway to develop the networks across the country. The Herat-Balkh railway project is an important example of the continued efforts. According to the Ministry of Public Works, this project will connect Afghanistan to international markets through Iran and Turkey and will also expand economic ties with Central Asian countries.

This is not just a railway project, but is considered a major gateway for trade, transit, and economic growth.

The Islamic Emirate has paid special attention to the economic sector in recent years. Developing railways, maintaining air corridors, expanding land trade routes, and creating transit facilities are part of this strategy. The government's goal is to transform Afghanistan from a consumer country to one of production, trade, and regional connectivity.

The development of the railway has many economic benefits. It reduces the cost of transporting goods, speeds up the process of exports and imports, provides opportunities for investment, and strengthens economic relations between different regions of the country.

At the same time, job opportunities are created and domestic products have better opportunities to reach international markets.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) believes that economic empowerment is of fundamental importance for development.

As economic activities expand, the political credibility of the country also increases, the standard of living of the people improves, and new avenues for development are opened.

Therefore, practical work is underway in different parts of the country for economic growth, and many major projects are under construction.

The Herat-Balkh railway project is a clear sign of this economic vision. Such projects turn Afghanistan's geographical location into an economic opportunity and make the country a key regional trade and transit hub.

If this series of infrastructure construction and economic activities continues, Afghanistan will soon obtain an even more important position on the regional economic map in the coming years and will take even faster steps towards self-reliance and development.

It is worth mentioning that there has been a 77.9 percent increase in rail freight, including both Afghanistan experts and imports by rail, compared to the previous year.

With going for modern railway technology, high-speed trains, and magnetic levitation systems, Afghanistan will even obtain greater economic and social benefits.

It is time that Afghanistan goes for further investment in rail networks as railways are key for sustainable, and prosperous futures.

## World Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June): Protecting Youth, Strengthening Society

*By: Azar Rasikh*

Drug abuse is often described as one of the silent killers of modern society. It is among the greatest social, public health, and economic challenges facing the world today. Every year, millions of people suffer from the devastating consequences of drug addiction, experiencing physical illness, psychological disorders, broken families, unemployment, and social isolation. The harmful effects of drug abuse extend far beyond the individual user, affecting families, communities, national economies, and public security. For this reason, combating drug abuse requires a comprehensive and sustained effort from governments, communities, educational institutions, families, and individuals alike.

Recognizing the seriousness of this global challenge, the United Nations General Assembly designated 26 June as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in 1987. The purpose of this observance is to raise awareness of the dangers associated with drug abuse, promote prevention and treatment, encourage international cooperation against illicit drug trafficking, and support efforts to build healthier and safer societies. Since then, countries around the world have marked this occasion through educational campaigns, scientific conferences, public awareness programs, exhibitions, and community activities aimed at reducing drug demand and supporting recovery.

Drugs are substances that affect the human nervous system, altering emotions, perception, behavior, and mental functioning. While some drugs may initially produce temporary feelings of pleasure, relaxation, or euphoria, repeated use often leads to physical and psychological dependence. Over time, addiction can become a chronic condition that is extremely difficult to overcome without professional treatment and strong social support. Common addictive drugs include opium, heroin, morphine, cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine, and the misuse of certain prescription medications.

There are many reasons why individuals become involved with drugs. Lack of awareness about their harmful effects, peer pressure, family conflict, unemployment, poverty, depression, anxiety, emotional distress, curiosity, and easy access to illicit substances all contribute to the problem. For many people, what begins as experimentation or recreational use gradually develops into dependency, destroying personal ambitions, relationships, and future opportunities. Understanding these risk factors is essential for designing effective prevention strategies.

The consequences of drug addiction are severe and wide-ranging. Physically, prolonged drug use damages nearly every major organ of the body. It increases the risk of heart disease, respiratory illnesses, liver and kidney failure, weakened immunity, infectious diseases, and premature death. Psychologically, addiction is closely associated with depression, anxiety disorders, insomnia, hallucinations, impaired judgment, personality disorders, and other serious mental health conditions. Many individuals lose the ability to make sound decisions, increasing the likelihood of self-harm, violence, and risky behavior.

The damage extends to families as well. Addiction often leads to conflict, domestic violence, neglect, financial hardship, and the breakdown of trust among family members. Children raised in households affected by substance abuse face greater risks of emotional distress, poor educational performance, behavioral problems, and future addiction themselves.

In this way, the impact of drug abuse may continue across generations if not properly addressed.

At the societal level, widespread addiction contributes to higher crime rates, reduced public safety, unemployment, poverty, and lower economic productivity. Governments must devote substantial financial resources to healthcare, law enforcement, rehabilitation services, and criminal justice systems. Valuable human potential is lost as productive members of society become trapped in cycles of addiction rather than contributing to economic and social development.

Young people occupy a particularly important position in the fight against drug abuse. They represent the future of every nation and possess the energy, creativity, and potential needed to build prosperous societies. At the same time, adolescence and early adulthood are periods during which individuals may be more vulnerable to peer influence, curiosity, and risky behaviors. For this reason, young people must recognize that protecting their physical and mental health is not only a personal responsibility but also a contribution to the future of their families and their country.

Youth should actively seek knowledge about the dangers of drug abuse, develop the confidence to refuse harmful influences, choose friends wisely, and engage in positive activities such as education, sports, volunteer work, entrepreneurship, and community service. Investing time in learning, developing professional skills, and contributing to society provides meaningful alternatives to destructive habits. Young people who pursue education, discipline, and moral values become role models for their peers and help create communities that reject drug abuse rather than tolerate it.

Families also have a fundamental responsibility. Parents are the first teachers in a child's life and play a decisive role in shaping attitudes, values, and behavior. Open communication, mutual trust, emotional support, appropriate supervision, and teaching life skills significantly reduce the likelihood that children will experiment with drugs. Encouraging participation in sports, cultural activities, and educational opportunities helps young people build confidence and resilience against negative influences.

Schools, universities, religious institutions, media organizations, and civil society likewise play essential roles. Educational institutions should provide accurate information about the dangers of drug abuse while promoting critical thinking, healthy lifestyles, and responsible decision-making. Media outlets should support awareness campaigns and avoid content that glamorizes drug use. Community leaders, educators, and religious scholars can help strengthen ethical values and encourage compassion toward individuals seeking recovery.

Governments bear primary responsibility for developing comprehensive strategies to address both drug supply and drug demand. Effective anti-drug policies include strengthening law enforcement against illicit trafficking, improving border security, supporting addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers, expanding public education, creating employment opportunities, and investing in healthcare services. Sustainable success requires coordination among government agencies, healthcare providers, educational institutions, community organizations, and international partners.

In Afghanistan, narcotics have long posed serious challenges to public health, security, rural livelihoods, and economic development. In recent years, the country's Islamic Emirate officials have announced and implemented measures aimed at reducing narcotics cultivation, production, and trafficking, including restrictions on poppy cultivation and enforcement operations in different parts of the country. Various reports have indicated significant reductions in opium cultivation following these measures.

At the same time, experts have noted that achieving lasting progress requires more than law enforcement alone. Long-term success depends on expanding treatment and rehabilitation services for people with substance use disorders, creating sustainable alternative livelihoods for farming communities, strengthening education and prevention programs, and maintaining continued cooperation

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# SPORTS

## Afghan MMA Star Farid Basharat Breaks into UFC Top 10

Afghan mixed martial arts star Farid Basharat has reached a major milestone in his skyrocketing career, officially breaking into the top 10 of the UFC's highly competitive bantamweight division.

According to the UFC's latest official rankings, Basharat secured the number 10 spot.

This achievement marks a significant moment for both the fighter and Afghanistan, showcasing his steady rise on the sport's biggest global stage.

The bantamweight division is widely regarded as one of the deepest and most talent-stacked weight classes in mixed martial arts, making his entry into the top tier all the more impressive.

Basharat's ascent is the result of years of dominant performances. Known for his technical precision and relentless work ethic, he has quickly transitioned from a rising prospect into a legitimate title contender.

What makes his journey even more remarkable is his flawless record. Basharat remains completely undefeated in his professional career, boasting a perfect 15-0 record.

With fifteen consecutive victories and a freshly minted spot in the top 10, the Afghan fighter is proving he is no longer just a name to watch—he is a serious threat to the very best in the world.

**The Kabul Times**

## Dejan Dedović Appointed as Afghanistan's New National Futsal Coach

The Afghanistan Football Federation has officially ushered in a new era, naming Dejan Dedović as the new head coach of the men's national futsal team.

Introduced on Wednesday, the veteran strategist has committed to a long-term project, signing a contract that runs through 2028.

Dedović steps into the dugout with an elite pedigree.

Armed with a prestigious Level 3 coaching license, he has spent years navigating the high-pressure world of international futsal. His impressive resume includes stints managing the national teams of Serbia and Tajikistan, alongside a successful run in the tactical grind of the Serbian Premier League.

The Serbian manager inherits a squad that is currently riding an all-time high. He takes over from Iranian coach Majid Mortazaei, the mastermind who recently guided Afghanistan to their historic, first-ever appearance at the FIFA Futsal World Cup.

By locking in a proven European tactician for the next few years, the federation is making a clear statement: they don't want the recent World Cup run to be a one-hit wonder. Dedović's mission is to build on that groundbreaking momentum, nurture the country's rising talent, and prove that Afghanistan belongs among the world's futsal elite.

**The Kabul Times**

## Ronaldo Hits Historic World Cup Milestone

Cristiano Ronaldo has done it again, rewriting the football history books by becoming the first player ever to score in six different World Cup tournaments.

The historic moment unfolded during Portugal's dominant 5–0 victory over Uzbekistan in their second group-stage match of the 2026 World Cup. Ronaldo found the back of the net twice, a performance that not only secured Portugal's ticket to the knockout rounds but also served as a passionate answer to his detractors.For the 41-year-old icon, the achievement was visibly emotional. Heading into the match, Ronaldo had been under immense pressure. Following a frustrating 1-1 draw against the Democratic Republic of Congo in Portugal's opening game, critics were quick to contrast his quiet start with the electrifying performances of rivals like Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé, Erling Haaland, Vinícius Júnior, and Harry Kane. Some pundits went as far as calling him a "burden" to his national team.

Ronaldo used that noise as fuel. After firing in his second goal against Uzbekistan, he sprinted toward the television cameras, shouting a clear message of defiance to anyone who doubted his place on the pitch.When asked about his post-goal reaction after the final whistle, Ronaldo didn't hold back. "It was just so they [the critics] don't forget," he said with a smile. "It's been going on like this for 23 years." With Portugal safely through to the next round, the legendary forward has reminded the world that even at 41, he is far from finished.

**The Kabul Times**

## Jalali Describes Brussels Visit as Significant Step in Afghanistan-EU Relations

KABUL: Second Deputy Political Minister of Foreign Affairs Zakir Jalali described the recent visit of an Afghan delegation to Brussels as an important milestone in relations between Afghanistan and the European Union.

In a post on his X page the other day, Jalali said the visit comes after agreements reached between Afghanistan, Germany, and Norway that enabled Afghan diplomats to resume their activities in those countries. He noted that the development represents a positive step toward broader engagement between Afghanistan and European nations.

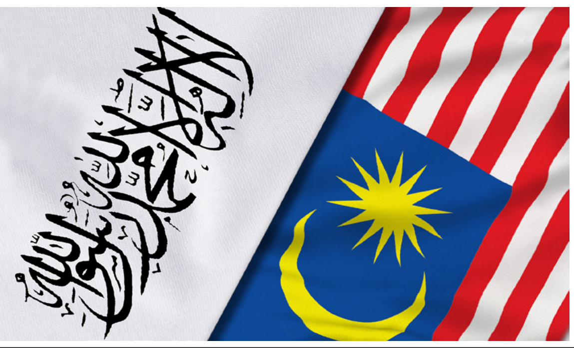
According to Jalali, the experience of reactivating Afghan diplomatic missions in Germany and Norway could serve as a practical model for other European countries seeking to engage with Afghanistan and address issues of mutual interest."The visit and discussions with European officials would pave the way for sustainable engagement based on mutual respect and shared interests, while contributing to stronger cooperation in the future," he said.The Brussels visit is viewed as part of ongoing efforts to expand diplomatic contacts and strengthen channels of communication between Afghanistan and European partners, Jalali added.

**The Kabul Times**

## Afghan, Malaysian Officials Discuss Strengthening Bilateral Relations

KUALA LUMPUR: Naqibullah Ahmadi, the Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate to Malaysia, in a meeting with Dato Ahmad Azam, Malaysia's Special Representative for Afghanistan and adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussed the progress of relations between the two countries.

The two sides exchanged views on recent developments in Afghanistan-Malaysia relations and explored ways to further strengthen political and economic cooperation, the embassy said in a statement on Wednesday.



The discussions focused on expanding diplomatic engagement, enhancing economic ties, and promoting cooperation in areas of mutual interest, the statement said.

Both sides emphasized the importance of deepening relations based on mutual respect and shared interests, and expressed optimism about the continued development of Afghanistan-Malaysia relations in the future.

**The Kabul Times**

## Agreements Signed to Support Returnees, Displaced Families, Ministry

KABUL: The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation said in a statement on Wednesday that it has signed five cooperation agreements worth $5.29 million with several partner organizations to enhance services for returnees, internally displaced persons, and host communities in provinces.

The agreements aim to strengthen humanitarian and support services, focusing on cash assistance, shelter rehabilitation, education, child care, and capacity-building of local social structures, the statement said.The assistance package is expected to benefit 1,320 families as well as 135,623 individuals, including internally displaced persons, returnees, and members of host communities in the provinces of Herat, Badghis, Ghor, Farah, and Nangarhar, the statement said.

The statement added that the initiative is part of ongoing efforts to improve living conditions, support reintegration, and address urgent humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations affected by displacement.The ministry emphasized that strengthening coordination with partner organizations remains a key priority in ensuring effective delivery of aid and services to those in need across the country.**The Kabul Times**

## Media Coordination Meetings Held in Faryab and Sar-e-Pul Provinces

KABUL: Coordination meetings have been held with spokespersons of government institutions, journalists, and representatives of state-run and private media outlets in Faryab and Sar-e-Pul provinces to enhance cooperation and improve media activities.

The primary objective of the meetings was to strengthen coordination between government institutions and media organisations and to promote more effective information sharing and communication, the Ministry of Information and Culture said in a statement on Wednesday.

The meetings discussed the important role of the media in reflecting realities on the ground, raising public awareness, and countering misinformation, rumours, and negative propaganda.

The participants emphasized that constructive cooperation between media organisations and public institutions is essential for ensuring accurate and timely dissemination of information.

According to the statement, journalists and media representatives shared their views, suggestions, and concerns regarding challenges in the field of information dissemination. The meeting also focused on ways to facilitate access to information and improve professional cooperation between media outlets and relevant authorities.**The Kabul Times**

## Afghan Delegation in China to Attend China–Eurasia Expo 2026

KABUL: Mawlavi Shahabuddin Saqib, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, and his accompanying delegation left for China to attend the China–Eurasia Expo 2026.

The delegation travelled to China following an official invitation from the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce said in a statement on Wednesday.

The China–Eurasia Expo 2026 is scheduled for June 25 to June 29 in Urumqi, the capital of China's Xinjiang Uyghur Region, the statement said.

The Afghan delegation includes Mohammadullah Bakhtiar, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and officials from several relevant government institutions, the statement said.

"The visit is intended to expand Afghanistan's trade and economic relations, showcase the country's investment opportunities, attract foreign investment, and strengthen economic cooperation with regional countries," the statement said.

The statement added that the China–Eurasia Expo is regarded as one of the largest economic and trade events in the region, bringing together government representatives, investors, and business leaders from across Asia and beyond.**The Kabul Times**

## World Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking...

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among national institutions, local communities, and international organizations.

Equally important is society's responsibility toward individuals recovering from addiction. Those who seek treatment deserve compassion rather than humiliation or rejection. Social stigma often discourages people from seeking help and makes recovery more difficult. Families, employers, educators, and community members should support recovering individuals by offering encouragement, opportunities for employment, and acceptance as they rebuild their lives. Recovery is a long-term process, and successful reintegration benefits not only the individual but society as a whole.

The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking reminds us that addiction is not simply an individual problem; it is a challenge that affects public health, social stability, economic development, and national prosperity. Preventing drug abuse requires education, awareness, early intervention, accessible treatment, effective law enforcement, and strong cooperation between governments and citizens. Every member of society has a role to play, whether as a parent, teacher, healthcare professional, policymaker, religious leader, or young citizen.

On this 26th of June, let us renew our commitment to protecting future generations from the dangers of drug abuse. By promoting awareness, supporting those seeking recovery, strengthening families, empowering young people, and implementing balanced and effective public policies, we can help build healthier, safer, and more resilient communities. A nation's greatest wealth is not found in its natural resources but in the health, character, knowledge, and hope of its people. Investing in a drug-free generation is therefore one of the most important investments any society can make for a brighter and more prosperous future.